

UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION DHA-05

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 SS-15 NSC-05 H-01  
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 LAB-04 SHL-01 /051 W  
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R 212135Z OCT 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2872  
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 7946

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, ELAB, AR, PA  
SUBJECT: PARAGUAYAN EXILE LEADERS ARRESTED IN ARGENTINA

REF: STATE 247747

1. RICARDO LEIVA, A LEADER OF THE PARAGUAYAN WORKERS  
CONFEDERATION-IN-EXILE, CALLED AT EMBASSY TO DENOUNCE  
ARREST OCTOBER 7-8 IN BUENOS AIRES OF EXILED POLITICAL  
LEADER EPIFANIO MENDEZ FLEITAS AND SON EPIFANIO MENDEZ  
VALL. ACCORDING TO LEIVA, ARREST OF FATHER APPEARS TO  
HAVE BEEN OUTGROWTH OF INCIDENT OCTOBER 6 IN WHICH SON,  
AS A PASSENGER IN AN AUTOMOBILE, WAS INVOLVED IN A  
TRAFFIC VIOLATION WHICH TOOK PLACE BY COINCIDENCE IN  
FRONT OF A HOTEL WHERE A VISITING PARAGUAYAN MILITARY  
DELEGATION WAS BEING LODGED AT THE TIME. POLICE ASKED  
SON TO RETURN TO POLICE STATION FOLLOWING DAY "TO CORRECT  
MINOR DETAILS" IN THE POLICE LEDGER AND FATHER  
REPORTEDLY ACCOMPANIED SON VOLUNTARILY TO POLICE  
STATION. BOTH HAVE BEEN HELD INCOMMUNICADO EVER SINCE.  
FAMILY FILED HABEAS CORPUS REQUEST IN COURTS, TO WHICH  
AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY HAVE RESPONDED THAT MENDEZ SR. AND JR.  
WERE BEING HELD BY ARGENTINE MILITARY UNDER SUSPICION OF  
CONNECTIONS WITH ARGENTINE EXTREMIST GROUPS AND THAT THEY

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WOULD BE TRANSFERRED TO JURISDICTION OF MILITARY AUTHORITIES

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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)  
U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/RS  
Margaret P. Grafeld, Director  
(X) Release ( ) Excise ( ) Deny  
Exempt(s): ( ) In Part (X) In Full DECLASSIFIED  
Classify as ( ) Extend as ( ) Downgrade to  
Date Declassify on Reason

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IN RESISTENCIA, CHACO PROVINCE, WHICH REPORTEDLY ISSUED ARREST ORDER AGAINST SON ON NOVEMBER 29, 1976.

2. LEIVA, ACCOMPANIED BY ANOTHER EXILE NAMED PABLO AQUINO, MAINTAINED THAT MENDEZ, WHO IS CURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE DISSIDENT COLORADO PARTY EXILE GROUP KNOWN AS "ASOCIACION NACIONAL REPUBLICANA", IS VICTIM OF AN INTRIGUE HATCHED BY STROESSNER REGIME AND FEARS AIM IS TO RETURN MENDEZ TO PARAGUAY OR WORSE. LEIVA SAID MENDEZ SR. PREVIOUSLY WAS ARRESTED IN ARGENTINA ON FALSE CHARGES LEVELLED BY POLICE IN SALTA PROVINCE AT BEHEST OF STROESSNER REGIME, BUT HE WAS SUBSEQUENTLY RELEASED BY ARGENTINE JUDICIAL AUTHORITIES. LEIVA STATED THAT LAST TIME SON PASSED THROUGH ARGENTINE CHACO PROVINCE WAS 15 YEARS AGO. MENDEZ SR. IS EVIDENTLY AN EX-CHIEF OF POLICE OF ASUNCION AND EX-PRESIDENT OF PARAGUAYAN CENTRAL BANK. LEIVA DENIED EMPHATICALLY THAT MENDEZ SR. INVOLVED IN EXTREMIST ACTIVITIES, SAYING HE INSTRUCTED PARAGUAYAN EXILE COMMUNITY TO BE ESPECIALLY CIRCUMSPECT IN AVOIDING POLITICAL ACTIVITIES IN ARGENTINA FOLLOWING MARCH 1976 COUP.

3. LEIVA HAS SENT PROTESTS TO ORIT, ICFTU AND AFL-CIO, ASKING FOR THEIR INTERVENTION WITH GOA ON MENDEZ' BEHALF

4. EMBASSY HAS MADE PRELIMINARY INQUIRY AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WHICH WE WILL FOLLOW UP.  
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